

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>8.0 CONCLUSIONS.....</b>	<b>1</b>
8.1 DISPARITIES WITHIN THE REGION.....	1
8.2 CHANGES IN THE FOREST PRODUCTS INDUSTRIES .....	1
8.3 CHANGES IN FOREST LAND OWNERSHIP .....	2
8.4 AGING POPULATION EFFECT ON THE DEMAND FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION .....	2

## **8.0 CONCLUSIONS**

The general conclusions of the socio-economic assessment indicate that although there have been changes in the socio-economic character of the Forest Region, they have been incremental and not dramatic. Furthermore, projections of current trends in population, recreation, and economic characteristics would suggest that over the 15 year planning horizon of the Forest Plan Revision, incremental changes along current lines are more likely than dramatic shifts in the socio-economic character of the region. Looking beyond the Forest Region to the socio-economic characteristics of its visitors and those who own second homes within the region, again it appears that the changes are likely to be incremental adjustments along present trend lines.

Based on these conclusions, it appears that the range of alternatives currently being considered in the Forest Plan Revision will not have major socio-economic impacts on the Forest Region as a whole. This does not preclude the possibility of significant localized impacts on specific communities or interest groups as the result of the actual implementation of certain alternatives.

We have identified four issues that have the potential to bring about accelerated socio-economic change in the Forest Region or its population of visitors.

### **8.1 DISPARITIES WITHIN THE REGION**

The northern part of the Forest Region, especially Coos County, has historically been stagnant in population growth and has not shared in New Hampshire's rapid economic development. The county has declined in population to the extent that the present population of Coos County is the same as it was in the 1920s. Oxford County in Maine shares some of the same problems as Coos County although its population has grown slightly. This is a long standing situation that is not related to the Forest Plan Revision. It is not likely that this situation will be impacted significantly one way or the other by the alternatives in the Forest Plan. The continuation of these disparities may however, lead to increased polarization within the region over the allocation of resources and the implementation of the Forest Plan.

### **8.2 CHANGES IN THE FOREST PRODUCTS INDUSTRIES**

The forest products industry is going through enormous changes, both in New England and nationally. The shift of manufacturing away from the traditional sources of wood, in some cases to overseas manufacturing plants with cheap labor, has reduced the relative importance of proximity to the resource base to the success of the wood products industry. The argument that a low cost and abundant timber supply supports a high value-added manufacturing industry within the region is consequently weaker. However, this may not be true for some parts of the high quality hardwood market.

### **8.3 CHANGES IN FOREST LAND OWNERSHIP**

The continued decline in the parcel size among private forest landowners in New England reduces the opportunities for timber stand improvement while increasing the reliance on larger private commercial forests and National Forest lands for high quality timber. Large corporate forest landowners, driven by short-term performance demands, are increasingly regarding timber stands as underperforming assets and are seeking to find ways to generate additional short term revenue or divest themselves of these timber lands. This is likely to increase the demand for timber from National Forest lands.

### **8.4 AGING POPULATION EFFECT ON THE DEMAND FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION**

During the lifetime of this next Forest Plan, many members of the “Baby Boom” generation born after the end of World War II will enter retirement, creating additional demand for more developed recreational activities, health care, retirement homes and second homes throughout the Forest Region. The effects of this growth are more likely to be found in the southern part of the Forest Region especially in Carroll and Grafton Counties.